

The University of Chicago

COMMENTS ON 18TH CENTURY
PURISMO

A PART OF A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED
TO THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF
THE HUMANITIES IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

1934

By
ANTONIO RUBIO

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COMMENTS ON 18TH CENTURY *PURISMO*

IT is a known fact of modern history that in the 18th century, Spanish life, despite its "plétora de tradicionalismo y de inercia" (Maldonado Macánaz), changes on coming in contact with French ideas and things. Imitating the French, then, extends to many phases of the social, political, economic, and intellectual activity of Spain. The well-known words of Quintana describe best conditions at the time:

Todo concurría a este efecto inevitable: nuestra corte, en algún modo francesa, el gobierno siguiendo las máximas y el tenor observados en aquella nación; los conocimientos científicos, las artes útiles, los grandes establecimientos de civilización, los institutos literarios, todo se traía, todo se imitaba de allí; de allí el gusto en las modas, de allí el lujo en las casas, de allí el refinamiento en los banquetes; comíamos, vestíamos, bailábamos, pensábamos a la francesa. . . .¹

To be sure, this Frenchifying process reached the lower classes only gradually and slightly, but none the less there had occurred changes in many of the national traits; as, for example, in those that have always made the delight of the romantically-inclined. Describing these changing customs, Cotarelo picturesquely writes as follows:

A la custodia un poco oriental de la mujer y a la galantería caballeresca, habían sucedido la fácil comunicación de los sexos y la prosaica novedad del *abate* y del cortejo. Ya no había ni mantos, ni tapadas, ni músicas nocturnas, ni cuchilladas tras cada esquina, ni rejas, ni jardines, ni tercerías de lacayos y criados, ni dueñas que duermen, ni rodrigones tolerantes, ni aquellos padres tan severos, ni aquellos hermanos tan bobos y tan espadachines. El punto de honra dejó de ser tan quisquilloso; el recuerdo de los antiguos sucesos nacionales, adversos y gloriosos, se hizo menos vivo; la misma fe, algo amortiguada, no inflamaba ya los espíritus.²

But the French ideology, with its natural incentive and enormous European prestige, did not gain ground in the Peninsula without the opposition of the *castizos*, who blamed the *afrancesados* for the loss of the national tradition.

As it was inevitable, the fashion reached also the language, and one of the most interesting aspects of the Spanish protest is shown in

¹ *Biblioteca de autores españoles*, XIX, 146.

² Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, *Iriarte y su época*, Madrid, 1897, p. 36.

the censure accorded the Gallicisms that were daily being introduced. Of all the effects of the French influence, perhaps no other was so regularly and earnestly denounced. From Feijóo to Gallardo many a significant author wrote regretfully about the new linguistic drift.³

In the present article we have briefly summarized and grouped several of these opinions, and remarked on their relationship to certain significant factors of the time, such as Gallophobia, French Neo-classicism, 18th century French *préciosité*, luxury, etc.

In general the Spanish authors here studied agreed on the principle that the introduction of French words and locutions vitiated the language and dishonored the Spaniards. The opposition, then, rested on two counts: the one, aesthetic; the other,

³ See Fray Benito Jerónimo Feijóo, "Paralelo de las lenguas castellana y francesa," pp. 45-49; "Introducción de voces nuevas," pp. 507-509, both in *Biblioteca de autores españoles*, vol. LVI. Same author, *Carta 23* in *Cartas eruditas*, vol. V.

Gregorio Mayáns y Siscar, *Cartas morales* . . ., Valencia, S. Fauli, 1773, I, 51, 66; II, 41; IV, 424; *Orígenes de la lengua española*, Madrid, V. Suárez, 1873, pp. 368, 467, 470, *passim*.

José Francisco de Isla, *Fray Gerundio*, chap. VIII, in *BAE*, XV, 195-199; *Cartas*, *ibid.* pp. 319, 557, 562, *passim*.

José Cadalso, *Cartas Marruecas*, X, XXXV, XXXVII, XLIX, L, LX, LXVII, LXXVII, LXXXII.

Emilio Cotarelo y Mori, *Ramón de la Cruz y sus obras* (sainete *El hospital de la moda*), *Nueva biblioteca de autores españoles*, XXIII, 50-56.

Juan Pablo Forner, *Exequias de la lengua castellana*, *BAE*, LXIII, 378-425.

Vicente García de la Huerta, *Theatro hespañol*, Madrid, P. Aznar, 1785-1786, vol. II, pp. xxxii, clxxxiii, *ce*, *passim*.

Tomás de Iriarte, *Poesías* (especially the fables "Los dos loros y la cotorra," "El retrato de golilla," "El té y la salvia," "La espada y el asador," and the epistles I and II), *BAE*, LXIII, 5-26; *Los literatos en cuaresma* in *Ramillete de los pensamientos más delicados* . . ., Tortosa, A. Ferreres, 1845, I, 93-96; *La música*, Madrid, Imp. Real, 1789, pp. 124-5.

Gaspar Melchor de Jovellanos, *A Arnesto*, *A Eymar*, *Pelayo* (prologue), *BAE*, XLVI.

Antonio de Capmany, *Teatro histórico crítico de la elocuencia española*, "Discurso preliminar"; *Centinela contra franceses*, Madrid, Fuentenebro, 1808, pp. 18, 19, 73, *passim*.

Leandro Fernández de Moratín, *Lección poética*, *Más vale callar*, *Derrota de los pedantes*, *BAE*, II.

José Marchena, *Obras literarias*, Sevilla, 1892-1896, I, 41-42; II, cii, 377.

Nicasio Alvarez de Cienfuegos, *Discurso* in *Memorias de la Academia Española*, I, 354-367.

Manuel José Quintana, *Discurso* in *Memorias de la Academia Española*, II, 633-639.

Pedro Sáinz y Rodríguez, *Don Bartolomé José Gallardo y la crítica literaria de su tiempo*, in *Revue Hispanique*, LI, 19-20; *Obras escogidas de Don Bartolomé José Gallardo*, Madrid, 1928, article "Ya no hai Pirineos," I, 47-50.

patriotic. The first, perhaps, sufficed to impress individuals who would mend their speech; the second certainly struck a more sympathetic cord and had, therefore, more efficaciousness; zeal for the language meant zeal for Spain.

There were several sources of Gallicisms; Father Isla enumerates four: court conversations, sermons, French books, and translations.

In the Court dwelled the most authentic and affected *petimetres* who, boasting of what they considered *bel esprit*, Frenchified and effeminated their language. Hence they were chastised in the satires of Feijóo, Isla, Cadalso, Ramón de la Cruz, Samaniego, Iriarte, and Jovellanos.

The sermons of which Isla speaks were the works of priests who made "indecente moda de predicar a la francesa." Iriarte, also, pokes fun at the "sermones a la francesa," and Forner makes Cervantes declare that "hasta el Espíritu Santo habla en semigalo." Many of these sermons were shameless imitations of the French, especially of those of Massillon and Bourdaloue, and their Gallicized language reached necessarily all classes in a nation as devout as Spain was at the time.

Books in French entered Spain in so large a number that Feijóo, defending his plan of translating from that language, hoped to save his nation much of the cash that went to France for the purchase of books. Their utility as cultural instruments was, however, accepted and proclaimed by men like Feijóo, Mayáns, Isla, Cadalso, Iriarte and Jovellanos.

Finally it was natural that "En tiempos que el dialecto de Toledo/se estudia en la leyenda gálica" (Iriarte), the contamination should also come from the numerous translations⁴ that were read, and that these should become an abundant source of Gallicisms. Against the translations and their authors is then directed much of the censure proffered by Isla, Cadalso, Forner, Iriarte, Capmany, the younger Moratín and Gallardo.

Translators were divided by Iriarte into two groups:

⁴ The profusion of translations in the 18th century was not an exclusive phenomenon of Spain, nor even the preponderance of the poor ones. Let it be recalled that although every other nation translated from the French, France itself was also crammed with translations from the English, an extensive list of which can be found in Gustave Lanson, *Manuel bibliographique de la littérature française*, Paris, Hachette, 1925, pp. 576-597. As to their quality, the fact that the same English works were rendered by different translators shows that some felt there was room for improvement.

Unos traducen obras celebradas
 Y en asadores vuelven las espadas;
 Otros hay que traducen las peores,
 Y venden por espadas, asadores.

The great offense perpetrated by the translators consisted in producing versions that did not even deserve the Crocian epithet of "brutte fedeli,"—they were translations that defrauded the thought of the French authors and crudely transplanted into Spanish elements of the lexicon and even of the syntax of the original. The ignorant authors of these performances were a group of perverse Spaniards who, according to Cadalso, flattered the foreigners and caused them to believe that Spanish was inferior to other languages. As a punishment, Capmany would have fined them, and the reverend Padre Isla suggests that they be deprived of their sex by declaring them "eunucos de la nación."

At the same time that the translators were thus blamed, little was said of the "traficantes de papel impreso" (as Forner qualified them) who, merely looking after their own gain, accepted the versions of incompetent translators.

It is evident that the commercialism of the time did not provide sufficient encouragement to turn out translations more acceptable. Forner recognized the sin of the publishers who "a la sombra de obras muy bien escritas en francés, han vendido al simple vulgo una barbaridad española." Thus speaks this author in his most extensive and vigorous contribution to *casticismo*: the *Exequias de la lengua castellana*.

Naturally not all the translations were poor, and a good many of the critics (Isla, Ramón de la Cruz, Huerta, Forner, the younger Moratín, Marchena, Gallardo), believing, no doubt, that good books always helped the language as well as the culture, were translators or arrangers of French works. Feijóo, Mayáns, Cadalso, Iriarte, and Jovellanos advocated more and better translations. The first two, especially, as if they had been of the Moderns in a new quarrel with the Ancients, had considerable faith in the virtue of translations, and trusted (recalling, perhaps, one of Perrault's assertions in his *Parallèles*), that the juice of the original could all be expressed in the rendering. That is why they had a vast plan of official translations in order to accelerate the spread of culture in Spain. According to Feijóo, it was by translating that France "recogió cuanto de erudición sagrada y profana" issued from the classical springs; and Cadalso observes that by the "traducir de todas Facultades," the

French language has succeeded in compiling all that has been said. The success and prestige of the neighboring nation suggested to them this cultural expedient,—to render into Spanish the French erudition.

This task should be committed to competent persons, masters of the two languages, and endowed with that necessary ability designated by Feijóo, *numen*; by Isla, *gustillo*; and by Capmany, *tino conjetural*, in order to render adequately the French idiom. Technical terms or *voces facultativas*, as called by Isla and Feijóo, were not to be rejected, for, being really Greek or Latin, to borrow them “es indispensable de unas naciones a otras.” Such an exception (diplomatically worded to appease the chauvinists), had to be made by some writers in order to appear as mildly Gallophile, and to be consistent with former precepts in which the Gallicisms were condemned almost absolutely.

To re-enforce this linguistic interdiction, it was customary to make comparisons of the two languages, and, as it was to be expected, French always came out the loser. Especially was that language reproached for the rigidity of its syntax and the economy of its vocabulary. Gallophobes like Huerta, Forner, Capmany, and Gallardo (the last two, especially, after the Napoleonic invasion), found in French almost nothing but faults. It was a language “exactísimo y por lo mismo sequísimo, indocilísimo y monotonísimo” (Forner), and its prosody in the Alexandrine verse resembled *cuatro martillazos*, reminders of *fraguas* or *batanes*. The *pobreza prosódica* and the *infacundia* of the French language are notorious, according to Huerta. Capmany, going into more details, affirms that this language is “la más embarazada en sus frases,” and in order to translate from Latin or Greek, “es muy pesado y pobre instrumento un idioma . . . tan ingrato, tan trivial, y tan sujeto a las amfibologías.” Gallardo states that French is “uno de los dialectos más insignificantes y cacófonos que abortó la lengua del Lacio,” and he adds that to compare the Castilian with the French language is to compare an *órgano* with a *chiflo de castrador*. Iriarte, as a musician, objected to what he thought were weaknesses of the French language for singing, on account of its “letras mudas, oscuras y nasales,” and of its tendency to do violence to the “cantables sonos” of the vowels.

Some writers did not vilify the French language (Mayáns, Cadalso, Moratín the younger, Jovellanos), but were satisfied with defending Spanish against the Gallicisms. A few found in French some desirable traits. Feijóo, for example, observes that French

may pretend to possess a certain advantage over Spanish, owing to the easier articulation of the former: French *se desliza*, Spanish *golpea*; the French pronounce *más blando*, the Spaniards, *más fuerte*. Mayáns declares that French is more erudite than Spanish because it has books that are more erudite. Capmany approved (before he turned Gallophobe) of the translators' use of "ciertos rasgos brillantes y expresivos de otra lengua" and of their risking "algunas espresiones nuevas para traducir las vivas y enérgicas del original." For his part, Father Isla confesses (several years after writing *Fray Gerundio*), that for him it is an indubitable fact that Spanish needs some of the "dulzura e insinuación francesa," provided it be used with taste and moderation.

A confession of this sort was something exceptional amidst the dithyrambs that were applied to Spanish. Isla himself had said before that Spanish "nada ha menester mendigar" of the other languages, and that any idiom in the latter, has its equivalent in Spanish equally *vivo*, *enérgico*, *airoso*, and *natural*. Forner puts in the lips of Apollo the declaration that Spanish is "una lengua de exquisita docilidad y aptitud," at the same time *majestuosa* and *concisa*, *tierna* and *impetuosa*, "ágil para las risas" and "noblemente rústica para los objetos campestres." Capmany, a well-documented lexicographer, stressed the *copia* of Spanish, and maintained that "la riqueza de nuestro diccionario usual y general" emanated from the autochthonous wealth of the language and not from any other vernacular.

Of this type were the praises addressed to Spanish, and in them we repeatedly find such epithets as *grave*, *sonora*, *dulce*, *flexible*, and *armoniosa*.

There were several factors that intensified the rather lively controversies concerning the language. In the first place, judging by their attitude towards France, Spaniards were easily divided into two groups: the Gallophobes and the Gallophiles. It can be said in general that the intensity of the censure against Gallicized speech stood in inverse ratio to the fondness that the critic felt for France and things French. When this fondness was null or negative, the censor gave vent to his passion in acrimonious and malevolent criticism. Thus puristic zeal and patriotic zeal were easily confused, the latter predominating in individuals naturally emotional, like Huerta, for example, who considered that "el glorioso filo de nuestras espadas" was the primal cause of the attacks that the French directed against Spanish culture. For the Gallophobes the defence of the language had, therefore, another attraction: to abuse

France. This tendency, natural enough between two neighboring and rival nations, had in Spain a respectable ancestry, glorified since the wars between Charles V and Francis I, but in the 18th century the aversion on the part of the Spaniards was exacerbated by the attacks or the petulant tone of some French writers and statesmen. Then the Spaniards would defend themselves, recalling their epoch of supremacy over the French, and returning insult with insult and arrogance with arrogance. The Spanish popular muse synthesized this antipathy in the 18th century by saying through the lips of an anonymous versifier:

Mas que digan soy arriano,
hugonote, jansenista,
apelante y calvinista,
moro, turco y luterano.
Mas que me llamen gitano,
mas que mujeres no me amen,
mas que contra mí declamen
toda humana criatura,
lo llevaré con frescura
como francés no me llamen.⁵

Another factor that contributed to the controversies on the language was the discussion concerning Neo-classicism. Spanish writers (as well as the Italians), were irritated by the tacit or expressed arrogation of the French that the patrimony of the ancients had been deposited in their care, as if they were the anointed custodians of the classical culture. Nourished in this belief, the French had developed their 17th century Classicism, with its rigid norms in which were prescribed even the rhetorical resources of the language; and propounded, in the 18th century, the Neo-classicism, which preserved the fundamental traits of its predecessor.

The attempt to establish in Spain this French aesthetics, to which several writers paid homage, occasioned the celebrated polemics about the merits of the Spanish and French drama,—a subject that could not fail to suggest other comparisons, such as that of the two nations, the two idiosyncrasies, the two languages. One effect of this controversy was that the critics, now more conscious of their language, became more fond of denouncing the Gallicisms.

Another determining cause of the debates on the language and its defense was that they had had in Spain worthy antecedents throughout the Renaissance. The discourses and linguistic commentaries of Ambrosio de Morales, Fernando de Herrera, Francisco de Medina,

⁵ Cited by Cotarelo, *Iriarte y su época*, p. 247.

and Juan de Jáuregui, to mention only four, were well known by the critics of the 18th century; the latter, in their campaign for the purity of the language often reproduced the arguments, censures, and dithyrambs of the earlier epoch.

There finally existed another fact that caused the Peninsular writers to reflect on the problem of the Castilian diction,—on the other side of the Pyrenees there was a nation of grammarians forever doting upon their language. At divers periods of the 18th century there developed in France a recrudescence of the controversies concerning the use of neologisms. So pure a writer as Voltaire had said that the French language was a “gueuse pincée et dédaigneuse, qui se complait dans son indigence,”⁶ and a learned periodical, the *Journal de la langue française*, to remedy the inadequacy of the vocabulary, went so far as to announce the appointment of several committees to study the proper means for enriching the language with the lexicon found in Montaigne, Rabelais, and other authors.⁷ The Spanish critics were acquainted with this attitude, especially Capmany whose linguistic studies reveal a good knowledge of the French controversies about *purisme*. It can, therefore, be said, without committing a paradox, that the French influence could be discerned even in the Spanish puristic campaign. Furthermore, let it be remembered that when the Gallicisms were not yet swarming in Spanish, that is, very early in the 18th century, a group of Spanish men of letters felt the need of establishing an institution composed of masters of the language and erudites who would watch over the language and defend it. The example came also from across the Pyrenees, where the French Academy maintained its traditional *purisme* by denying its sanction to whatever was alien to the language. In accordance with this norm the Spanish Academy was founded, the purpose of which, representing the puristic theories of the time, is voiced in the mottoes it adopted, the last of which typically states that the Academy “Limpia, fija y da esplendor.” When in the future the antigallicist censures should begin, the language will already be provided with an official seat of *purismo*.

A modern philologist (Dauzat) has said that the opposition that purists offer to neologisms is subjective: the new word makes their thinking process more complicated and hence their objection. We believe the theory to be plausible, but doubtless there is also a sort of instinct that defends the language, the inertia of the mother tongue

⁶ F. Gohin, *Les transformations de la langue française pendant la deuxième moitié du XVIII^e siècle (1740–1789)*, Paris, Belin frères [1903], p. 50.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 66.

is a protection against the pressure of another language, and in this manner we are all endowed with a certain amount of purism.

Purists are affectively fervid, often becoming exaggerated and inconsistent. They exclude the archaism, evidence of linguistic evolution, and reject the neologism, a normal function of the language. As if there could be a final speech, some propose "to fix" the language according to the standard set by certain authors; others, as La Bruyère puts it, speak correctly and boringly; many, finally, are opposed to innovations, to the natural mobility of usage or popular caprice. It seems, in short, as if the language were in a dilemma: to remain pure, away from life, or to cling to life and become corrupted.

We have referred above to the inconsistency of the purists and we must add that those of Spain showed this failing in more than one respect. Some of them maintained that anything and everything could be well said in Spanish without outside help, and almost in the same breath failed in the performance of what they were preaching. With the best-meant inconsistency, perhaps, Feijóo was one of the first to censure the Gallicisms and to introduce them also; and Cadalso developed his style by mixing it with a good dose of French insinuation. As time went on, some writers changed their minds, and then we see a Feijóo, who at first had preached against Gallicism, defend them openly; just the opposite of what Capmany had done, who almost fondled them as a youth and ended by cursing them in his old age. For his part, Gallardo also commits the sin of inconsistency when in the same article in which he attacks the Gallicisms, he praises the Spanish language for its wealth, brought by "*tantas y tantas naciones . . . que han venido a respirar entre nosotros el ambiente suave de nuestra atmósfera.*" The censors, then, did not practice their own theory, nor could it be otherwise since the existent lexicon did not seem adequate to express all that the new philosophy had to say regarding the physical or the social world. Consciously or unconsciously, all verified the fact that certain things could be better said in French than in Castilian, and that in order to express them aptly, one needed to have recourse to certain neologisms and to dare use some novel phrases or expressions. These were the Gallicisms, and their use constituted a linguistic loan which capable writers knew how to employ, and the inept carried to abuse.

The censured Gallicisms were of two kinds: lexical and syntactic; at times they were mixed. The analysis of the syntax or style requires great objectivity and consummate prudence. This type of

Gallicism is not easily recognized or studied in Spanish owing to that "cierta comunidad vaga de fraseología románica" (Menéndez Pidal), and unless they are crude and violent, or long or very new, they are apt to slip into the style of even good authors, and are discovered only by the most sagacious of the professional grammarians. So pure a writer as Jovellanos repeatedly constructed the superlative after the French fashion, saying, "bajo de un cielo el más benigno,—sobre un suelo el más fértil." Some writings done in good Castilian had an undefinable something that smacked of French,—perchance it was the source, and in the case of translations, these could not fail to disclose what was characteristic in the style of the original, whether it was the ease and naturalness of a Voltaire or the affectation of a Marivaux. At any rate, such stylistic innovations attracted attention and at times amounted to Gallicizing. But *the* Gallicism was that of vocabulary and, as has already been said, abounded as a consequence of the invading French luxury and fashions, of frequent trips to France, of commercial activity, and of the growth of the reading public.

Despite their multitudinous censures, the Spanish critics were not very explicit as to what to do when it came to naming things and ideas that had not existed before in Spain, and had come from France. Mayáns is rather elaborate and gives us his first, second, and third choice for the coining of neologisms. This author assures us that

. . . antes le formaría de una raíz conocida en la lengua española o compuesta de voces de ella que tomándole de alguna raíz desconocida o de voces extranjeras, y antes le tomaría de las provincias de España que de las extrañas, antes de la lengua latina como más conocida que de otra muerta.⁸

The method, we must agree, could not be more scientific,—and nationalist; but at best it was workable on a limited field and its practical application should prove dilatory. And who was going to wait? Neologisms thus derived generally remain the appanage of the learned; few attain the success of Parmentier's *pomme de terre*.

Moreover, the censors seemed to be ignorant of the fact that many Gallicisms in Spanish were also neologisms in French. Philosophers and scientists were necessarily neologists (witness: Bayle, Fontenelle, Dalember), and many of their terms had been invented in France by laying under contribution the classical languages, more

⁸ *Orígenes de la lengua española*, p. 467.

or less what would have been done in Spanish if the thing named had been original in this language.

Once we accept the necessity of using technical terms, nothing seems more reasonable or practical than to adopt the rule which, as advocated by Feijóo, was the opposite to that advised by Mayáns. Instead of employing "agregados de distintas voces"—said Feijóo—to name new objects and ideas, "que es lo mismo que vestir el idioma de remiendos," he proposed to seek the new words in some foreign language. The proposal was tantamount to assimilating into Spanish the French neologisms—for that, obviously, was the language he had in mind—a procedure reasonable enough, since science was developing a cosmopolitan phraseology composed of Greek and Latin roots which, like the terms of rhetoric, all vulgar tongues had the right to use. In what other manner could a Spaniard say *physiocrate*, *lithologie*, *automatisme*, *monade*, *microcosme*, etc., that would be better than *fisiócrata*, *litología*, *automatismo*, *mónada*, and *microcosmo*? What mattered if the French had used them before? The very words *purista* and *purismo*, repeatedly appearing in the language controversies, what were they but necessary neologisms (quasi-Gallicisms), inexpressable with the terms *puro* and *puritano*, *pureza* and *puridad*, more *castizos*, but inadequate to convey the new meaning? As Dauzat puts it, rarely does a neologism have the same meaning of an old word; the new word usually "indicates semantically or affectively a new shade, a more precise idea, in short, another value."⁹ There were likewise other neologisms in French,—a long line of words issued from the fashions and which entered Spain with the latter. The censure of these Gallicisms was also influenced by the unfavorable opinion that many maintained in regard to luxury: "tristes richesses" were called by Gresset the words that indicated fashionable articles, and this judgment was made use of in the pleas of the moralists and grammarians.

A sort of adjunct of the fashions of the 18th century was the French *préciosité* which only lacked a Molière to immortalize its ridiculous speech. From this affectation is derived the Spanish variety so severely satirized at the hands of the critics. The language of the *lechuguinos* imitated the jargon of the *élégants*, *merveilleux*, and *célestes* of France. When Cadalso causes a *petimetra* to say: "Mi nuevo jefe de cocina es divino," the sentence is a Gallicism from beginning to end, but the word *divino* was, in this

⁹ Albert Dauzat, *Histoire de la langue française*, Paris, 1930, pp. 159-160.

sense, a neologism in French,—a favorite of the *précieux*¹⁰ of the time. In this manner semantics operated following the whims of the so-called innovators, who gave a French meaning to various Spanish words. Gallicisms by their significance were thus formed from genuinely Spanish terms: *abordar*, *apercibir*, *picante*, *objeto*, *humanidad*, *sufragio*, and numerous others. Out of the seventy or eighty Gallicisms denounced by Isla and Iriarte, we find that only five have ceased to be used in contemporary Spanish, or at least we do not recall having heard them employed: *pavis*, *village*, *remarcable*, *habitudes*, and *cubrir de horror*; the others, from *unción* and *moral evangélica* to *libertinaje*, will be in use until evolution declares them archaic. This, like the linguistic loan or the native neologism, is a normal function of any living tongue.

There are epochs when languages overflow with new words. Spanish has received many such accretions, the most celebrated of which in the literary annals is undoubtedly the *culleranismo* of the 17th century. Without attempting to prove anything, it may be instructive to contrast rapidly this movement with the Gallicizing tendency. In the first place, the reaction against *culleranismo* is analogous to that provoked by the use of Gallicisms, except that the nationalist element was more prevalent in the 18th century controversies. In the 17th century there were also some authors, compliant with the conventional rhetoric, who satirized the neologists. There was analogy, likewise, in the fact that sooner or later the censors themselves would commit the same sin that they had condemned.

By its artistic aim—the attempt to renovate a restricted field like poetry—we should say that *culleranismo* was the more conscious or purposeful of the two tendencies. Hence the difference in the extension and effects of the two phenomena. Although *culte-*

¹⁰ Coyer, 18th century author, satirizes in this manner the language of the “grand monde” in a letter supposed to have been written to an English lady: “Vous avez fait des progrès dans notre langue, & vous les suivez en lisant la Bruyère, Racine, Montesquieu, & Fontenelle. Ils vous apprendront bien à rendre vos idées avec ordre, clarté & justesse: mais ils ne vous donneront pas ces expressions brillantes qui distinguent le grand monde. Par exemple, d’une chose qui a une bonté commune, vous dites simplement qu’elle est bonne: une importante diroit, *c’est miraculeux! c’est divin!* Estes-vous un peu fatiguée? Il faute être *excedée, anéantie*. Un coup de vent a-t-il dérangé une boucle de vos cheveux? Ne vous fâchez pas, soyez *furieuse*: vous manquez jusques dans l’alphabet. Au sortir du dernier Opera, vous dites à la maison, tandis qu’à vos côtés la femme d’un Traitant crioit à l’hôtel. N’attendez pas que je vous fasse un dictionnaire dans une lettre. Étudiez les femmes qui ont les plus belles aigrettes, & les hommes à talons rouges. “*Œuvres de M. l’Abbé Coyer*, Londres, 1765, I, 233–234.

ranismo passed into prose and oratory, the fad, from its very origin was for the intellectually-favored or erudite,—in other words, for a minority.

Culteranismo, then, both in scope and effects, was of lesser extension than *galicismo*. Gongora's hyperbation did not root in the language any more than some violent Gallicisms of syntax. In that which concerns the vocabulary, it is well known that *culteranismo* endowed the language with some necessary words that sound today unaffected and natural. The Gallicizing tendency also added many terms, but coming as they did from the language of a neighboring country, during a period of great intellectual agitation, voyages, copious readings even in the masses, etc., the influx reached a vast diffusion that lasts into our days.

An irreconcilable *purismo* could not triumph in such circumstances, and Larra's utterance that the puristic preoccupation was a hindrance "para entrar más adentro en el espíritu del siglo"¹¹ seems to us unjustified. More openly hostile to the "espíritu del siglo" in Spain was the religious preoccupation, and yet there was a marked advance in the field of rationalism.

Neither were all purists mere "reprochadores de voquibles," nor were all Gallicists pitiless "prevaricadores del buen lenguaje." Both groups contributed to the slow but constant evolution of the language. Instead of pillaging the classic languages, as was done by the Renaissance erudites, the Gallicists borrowed from the French according to their tastes and needs and added thereby numerous elements to the present Spanish diction. The purists on their part helped to check the abuses of the Gallicists, and essayed the capability of Spanish to coin neologisms with native elements. Usage, as Vaugelas said, "fait beaucoup de choses par raison, beaucoup sans raison et beaucoup contre raison," and so it was in Spain. Many words were rejected and many were incorporated. We may, then, say with Menéndez Pidal that the *purismo* adopted in the 18th century "fué templado, el que prevaleció e informa la lengua que hoy usamos."¹²

The celebrated grammarian and lexicographer Don Vicente Salvá, born at the end of the period here studied, advised not to wonder at the "continuas vicisitudes" to which Spanish was exposed. He explained them as caused by the speech of the uneducated, by the commerce and wars with foreign nations, by the new discoveries, by the fads among writers, etc. But as these factors

¹¹ *Obras completas*, Madrid, Yenes, 1843, III, 81.

¹² *Antología de prosistas españoles*, Madrid, 1917, p. 333.

always rest on the native stock of the language, the inevitable result is that in spite of all, Spanish still maintains its unequivocal personality. To exemplify his assertion (perhaps aiming also to set at ease the *puristas*), Salvá makes use of the following picturesque simile:

Este tipo [the native stock] forma la base de la lengua como la forman en nuestro traje la capa y la mantilla. Dénse a la primera todas las variaciones imaginables en las vueltas, esclavina y cuello: por la capa y por el modo de embozarnos somos distinguidos entre todos los pueblos de Europa. . . .¹³

ANTONIO RUBIO

¹³ Vicente Salvá, *Gramática de la lengua castellana*, París, 1897, p. xix.

